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Postville is the 'Hometown of Hope;' Official ribbon campaign launched

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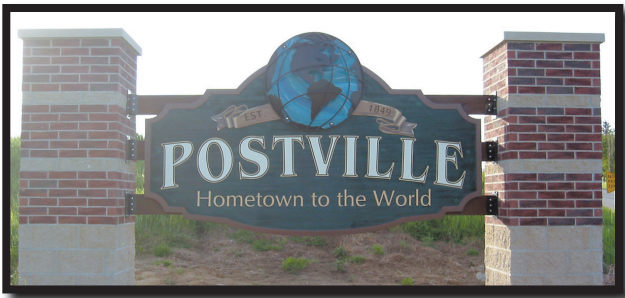
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What's happening in and around Postville.....

Community Presbyterian Cookbooks are here

The Community Presbyterian Church Cookbooks are here. Great gifts and only \$10. Available at the church office, 864-3736. Mornings only. After services on Sundays and at our local banks.

This week at Turner Hall; come for help or to volunteer

Services for those affected by the closing of Agriprocessors, Inc continue at Turner Hall. The Hall is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Services are as follows: Monday, December 15: 12 to 4 p.m. Rental assistance and LiHEAP applications; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Food Assistance (DHS) Upper Explorerland; Tuesday, December 16: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rental Assistance and LiHEAP applications; bread baking at KCG; Wednesday, December 17: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Food Assistance (DHS) Upper Explorerland; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rental Assistance and LiHEAP applications; 1:30 p.m. Legal Aid, tax presentations, intake to follow; 2-5 p.m. Food Pantry open; 6 p.m. Postville Community Gathering, meal, toys, ribbon campaign; Thursday, December 18: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rental Assistance and LiHEAP applications; Congressman Braley visiting Postville; Free Clinic at First Lutheran in Decorah from 5:30 to 8 p.m.; Saturday, December 20: 9 a.m. to noon, Food Pantry Open.



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Citizens State Bank employees Heather Bissell, Karla Johnson and Kevin Cronk stand around the "Grinch" tree they designed and decorated for the bank's friendly tree decorating contest. The bank hosted an after hours event last Wednesday evening. Be sure to stop in the bank and check out all the trees.

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Postville Herald-Leader

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Postville is the "Hometown of Hope;" official ribbon campaign launched, community dinner and holiday toy distribution to be held tonight

Postville is the sight of a humanitarian and economic disaster these days following the May 12 Immigration Raid and the filing of bankruptcy by Agriprocessors, Inc.—but it is also a place with hope. The "Hometown of Hope" Ribbon Campaign has been developed with three main objectives: inspire neighbors to help one another in this time of many challenges; visually draw attention to the broad-reaching impact of this crisis; and to build solidarity as a community.

Families affected by the crisis are encouraged to tie red ribbon to trees, door handles, and fences in their front yards. Ribbon is available at Turner Hall and through community

churches and the synagogue. Other communities are encouraged to wear red ribbons to show support for the people of Postville.

The "Hometown of Hope" Ribbon Campaign will be officially launched at a Postville community dinner on Wednesday, December 17, 2008, at Turner Hall, Postville. The meal will be served from 6-8 p.m., and all community members are encouraged to attend with their families.

In addition to the meal (served free of charge), parents will have the opportunity to select a toy for their children this holiday season. The ribbon campaign launch will take place at 7

p.m.

Known to many as the "Hometown to the World," Postville is also the "Hometown of Hope."

The Postville Response Coalition is composed of community organizations and city and county government officials, and was formed in response to the ongoing humanitarian and economic disaster in Postville, Iowa. The purpose of the coalition is to coordinate the disaster response efforts and provide services as effectively as possible to those in need.

For more information, contact Maryn Olson, Acting Local Coordinator, at 563-864-7021 or marynolson@hotmail.com.

Officials from Harkin's office visit with displaced workers, other concerned citizens; trial date for Rubashkin, plant reset for September of 2009



Concern expressed to Harkin staff

Pastor Steve Brackett of St. Paul Lutheran Church talks with a representative from Sen. Tom Harkin's office at Turner Hall last Wednesday. Members of the clergy have urged our state and federal representatives and senators to visit Postville to see first hand the devastation here. Others pictured are Mayor Robert Penrod, Lyle Opheim and Ginger Medberry who is speaking with another Harkin staffer.

Representatives from U. S. Senator Tom Harkin's office were in Postville last Wednesday to visit with displaced workers, clergy and other concerned citizens about the plight of those affected by the filing of bankruptcy by Agriprocessors, Inc. They also expressed concern about those immigrants who have been affected by the immigration raid which occurred on May 12.

Among those here to assist persons seeking answers was Dianne Liepa, who said she

was pleased to be back home and, hopefully, be able to help people from her hometown.

She said, "I grew up in Frankville and graduated from Postville High School in 1966. I am very concerned about the well-being of my hometown."

A veteran member of Harkin's staff, she continued by thanking the area volunteers and community leaders and vowed to take the concerns and questions back to the Senator.

Others from Senator Har-

kin's staff who were present included Kim Taylor of his Cedar Rapids office; Amy Campos, who works with immigration and Allison Hart, who works with housing.

The women helped those with questions fill out forms and answered their questions concerning insurance coverage and nonpayment of wages by saying they would seek out the authorities who could answer the questions.

Postville Clergy, along with other community leaders continue to express concern that neither U.S. Senator has visited Postville since the raid and impending closure of the plant.

The Clergy all agreed that they have seen a steady increase in the sadness and depression of those who have lost their jobs.

Paul Rael, of St. Bridget Hispanic ministry said, "The town is hurting and devastated. People are not happy living off the generosity others and wants to work."

Freund pleads guilty

Karina Freund, a former human resources employee at Agriprocessors, Inc pleaded guilty last Wednesday in U. S. District Court in Cedar Rapids. She is charged with a misdemeanor of aiding and abetting the practice of hiring undocumented workers. If convicted, she faces up to six months in federal prison and a fine of up to \$3,000 for each illegal immigrant she helped.

While pleading guilty, she agreed to help the government in its prosecution of other charges filed in connection with the May 12 raid. She was originally charged with conspiracy to harbor undocumented immigrants. Freund, who lives in Fayette, is originally from Peru and is not an American citizen.

The trial date for Agriprocessors, Inc and Sholom Rubashkin has been moved to September 8, 2009. The date was changed from January 20 to the September date.

The date has also been set for the trial of operations

manager, Brent Beebe.

The prosecutor in the case is Assistant U. S. Attorney Peter Deegan.

The trial, originally set for Jan. 20, includes charges of conspiracy to harbor undocumented workers for profit, harboring and aiding and abetting the harboring of undocumented workers for profit, conspiracy to commit document fraud, aiding and abetting document fraud, aiding and abetting aggravated identity theft and bank fraud.

Court documents state that Agriprocessors, Inc and Sholom Rubashkin face twelve counts, Beebe faces ten and Hosam Amara and Zeev Levi, who are still at large, face four counts each.

Court documents also state that Agriprocessors would be forced to forfeit its name and that of several of its products if convicted of charges connected to the immigration raid held at the plant on May 12.

City could owe millions

The City of Postville, according to papers filed last week, could be liable for \$4 million in debt if Agriprocessors, Inc. does not survive.

The City of Postville has expressed great concern over the debt and has filed a motion to have the bankruptcy court move the case from New York to Iowa.

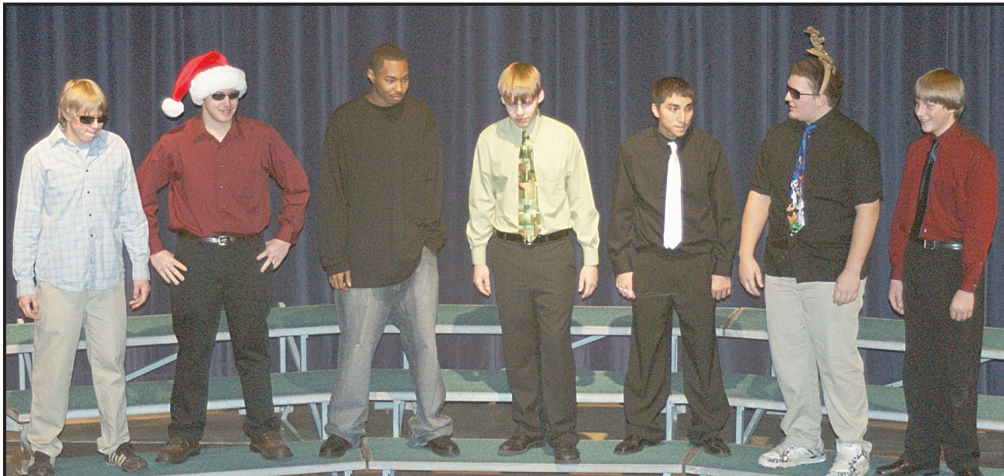
The four million dollar debt comes from an obligation to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for construction of the wastewater treatment facility and an agreement reached in 2004. According to an agreement with the City, Agriprocessors was to pay a percentage to the USDA each month for twenty years.

The treatment plant was built as part of a settlement agreement of environmental complaints against the wastewater discharge at the company. The motion filed in court further states that Agriprocessors owes the City of Postville back water and sewer bills in the amount of \$100,177.

Carol sing to be held tonight at St. Paul

A carol sing will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 17, 2008. Over 20 traditional Christmas carols will be sung by those attending the event. Everyone is welcome to pause from the rush and join together in peaceful reflection of the Advent and Christmas season. Additionally, the St. Paul Bell Choir will play Silent Night. The carol sing will be followed by a light soup supper (freewill donation).

Winter Concert at PHS



Members of the men's chorus sing a holiday tune during the concert in the Fine Arts and Civic Center last week. Pictured are Kory Turner, Jon Horns, Seon Thomas, Patrick Brackett, Anthony Flores, Jordan Everman and Will Brackett. Their director is Diane Wirkler.



The High School Band, under the direction of Shauna Marie Johnsen, plays a seasonal selection during the concert held last Thursday night. The concert, which featured all vocal and instrumental groups, was held in the Fine Arts and Civic Center.